

ISLE AU HAUT HARBOR, ME.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

WITH A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, REPORT ON
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF ISLE AU HAUT HARBOR, ME.

DECEMBER 17, 1915.—Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors and ordered
to be printed, with illustration.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, December 16, 1915.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a letter from the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, of this date, together with copy of a report from Maj. F. A. Pope, Corps of Engineers, dated August 18, 1915, with map, on preliminary examination of Isle au Haut Harbor, Me., made by him in compliance with the provisions of the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915.

Very respectfully,

LINDLEY M. GARRISON,
Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,
Washington, December 16, 1915.

From: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army.

To: The Secretary of War.

Subject: Preliminary examination of Isle au Haut Harbor, Me.

1. There is submitted herewith, for transmission to Congress, report dated August 18, 1915, with map, by Maj. F. A. Pope, Corps of Engineers, on preliminary examination authorized by the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915, of Isle au Haut Harbor, Me.

2. Isle of Haut is an island at the southeastern entrance to Penobscot Bay. The village of Isle au Haut is situated on the northwest side of the island opposite Kimballs Island, the passage between the two islands being known as Isle au Haut Thoroughfare, which is the harbor for the village. This passage is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length and from 400 to 1,500 feet wide. It has ample depth, except near the upper end, where it is obstructed by a bar extending entirely across, and having a depth of only 1 foot at low tide. The mean tidal range is about 9.6 feet. The improvements particularly desired are the dredging of a channel through this bar, and the removal of some projecting rocks near the steamboat wharf at Point Lookout, which is about 1 mile from the town of Isle au Haut. This town has a permanent population of about 100, and a summer population of about 900. The principal business of the community is fishing and providing for the summer inhabitants. The district officer reports that the commerce is small and there is no prospect of an increase even if the desired channel were provided. To remove the rocks near the wharf at Point Lookout would simply make the landing more convenient, and a small extension of the wharf would accomplish the same result. The district officer is therefore of opinion that the locality is not worthy of improvement by the General Government. The division engineer concurs in this opinion.

3. This report has been referred, as required by law, to the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and attention is invited to its report herewith, dated October 12, 1915, concurring in the views of the district officer and the division engineer.

4. After due consideration of the above-mentioned reports, I concur in the views of the district officer, the division engineer, and the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors and therefore report that the improvement by the United States of Isle au Haut Harbor, Me., is not deemed advisable at the present time.

DAN C. KINGMAN,
Chief of Engineers, United States Army.

REPORT OF BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS.

[Third indorsement.]

THE BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS,
October 12, 1915.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY:

1. The following is in review of the district officer's report, submitted under authority of the act of March 4, 1915, on preliminary examination of Isle au Haut Harbor, Me.

2. This locality is about 24 miles easterly from Rockland, Me. A passage between Isle au Haut and Kimballs Island is known as Isle au Haut Thoroughfare, and on it is the harbor of Isle au Haut. A village with the same name is situated on Isle au Haut. There is ample depth in this waterway, except at the northern entrance, where a bar practically dry at low water extends across it. The mean range of tide is about 9.6 feet. The improvement desired is a dredged channel through the bar and the removal of some rocks claimed to interfere with navigation.

3. The permanent population adjacent is about 100, and there has been no increase in recent years. The principal industries are fishing and catering to the needs of summer residents, numbering about 900. The commerce is therefore quite small. The district officer states that the inconvenience caused by the rocks most complained of would be overcome by a short extension of the pier. In the immediate vicinity of the harbor proper the depth is ample and the shelter adequate for such vessels as are likely to make use of this harbor. The dredged channel through the bar would be a convenience and not a necessity, as it would merely save the short distance around Kimballs Island. The district officer reports the locality as unworthy of improvement and the division engineer concurs.

4. Interested parties have been informed of the unfavorable report of the district officer and given an opportunity of submitting statements and arguments to the board, but no communications on the subject have been received.

5. The improvement contemplated would affect only a small commerce, which is accommodated under present conditions with slight inconvenience. The resulting benefits would not be of sufficient magnitude to warrant the probable cost of the work. Two unfavorable reports covering this locality are now before Congress, and there has been no material change in conditions since they were submitted. In view of these facts, the board concurs with the district officer and the division engineer in the opinion that it is not advisable for the United States to undertake the improvement of Isle au Haut Harbor, Me.

6. In compliance with law, the board reports that there are no questions of terminal facilities, water power, or other related subject which could be coordinated with the suggested improvement in such manner as to render the work advisable in the interests of commerce and navigation.

For the board:

FREDERIC V. ABBOT,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Senior Member Present.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF ISLE AU HAUT HARBOR, ME.

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
Portland, Me., August 18, 1915.

From: The District Engineer Officer.

To: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army
(Through the Division Engineer).

Subject: Preliminary examination of Isle au Haut Harbor, Me.

1. The river and harbor act of March 4, 1915, directs a preliminary examination of Isle au Haut Harbor, Me.

2. Isle au Haut Me., is an island at the southeastern entrance to Penobscot Bay, Me., and about 85 miles northeast of Portland, Me. The village of Isle au Haut is situated on the northwest side of the island opposite Kimballs Island. Between Isle au Haut and Kimballs Island is a passage called Isle au Haut Thoroughfare, which is the harbor for the village and is what is referred to in the act as Isle au Haut Harbor.

3. The Thoroughfare is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length and from 400 to 1,500 feet wide. It has ample depth, except near the upper end, where it is obstructed by a bar extending entirely across it. Across the bar from 12 foot contour to 12 foot contour the distance is about 1,700 feet. This bar is bare at low tide except for a narrow, winding channel about 1 foot deep. The mean range of tides is about 9.6 feet. There are some projecting rocks about 25 feet from the steamboat wharf which interfere with the landing of boats at Point Lookout, which is at the northern entrance to the Thoroughfare. It is also reported by residents of the island that there are some projecting rocks which are a menace to navigation, between Flake Island and Birch Point, between the mouth of Barbers Creek and Burnt Island, and between Burnt Island and Isle au Haut, about 1,200 feet northeast of the mouth of Barbers Creek. The locations of these rocks I have been unable to determine with the facilities available for a reconnaissance. The steamboat company which runs boats from Point Lookout through the channel between Burnt Island and Isle au Haut complains only of the rocks next to the steamboat wharf. For an understanding of the reference to these localities attention is invited to the accompanying map.

4. The locality is shown on Coast Survey Chart No. 309. A map¹ of the harbor with its approaches, enlarged from the Coast Survey chart, with borings indicated thereon made for this preliminary examination, is submitted herewith. The borings shown are approximate only in their location, but are of sufficient accuracy for the purpose of this report.

5. The population of the town of Isle au Haut, which consists of Isle au Haut and several small adjacent islands, is given in the census for 1910 as 106 and has not increased materially since. The summer population is about 900. The principal business of the community is fishing and providing for the summer inhabitants.

6. The nearest railroad point is Rockland, Me., about 24 miles to the westward across the mouth of Penobscot Bay. Transportation is furnished by the Vinal Haven & Rockland Steamboat Co., whose boats make a round trip from Rockland to Swans Island via Isle au Haut 6 days in the week for about 6 months in the year, and 3 trips per week during the fall, winter, and spring. Mail is carried by a small boat to Stonington, there being two mails per day each way in summer and less frequent service in winter.

7. The steamboat company claims that its business amounts to about \$2,400 per year, of which about two-thirds is received from passenger and about one-third from freight traffic. Besides this there is considerable traffic by private boats, both passenger and freight. The extent of this traffic can not be determined. I have been unable to obtain any further commercial statistics for the harbor.

8. Two preliminary examinations have previously been made of this locality—

First. A preliminary examination of "Isle au Haut Thoroughfare, between the island of Isle au Haut and Kimballs Island, with a view to obtaining a channel 12 feet deep and 30 feet wide," was made in 1902, report of which is published in House Document No. 224, Fifty-eighth Congress, second session. Conditions at that time

¹ Only the vicinity sketch is printed.

were about as they are now. The permanent population was somewhat larger and the summer population considerably smaller than at present. The report upon this examination was unfavorable on the grounds that the only object which such an improvement could serve would be to meet the prospective demand for traffic through the bar; that so long as the present harbor is sufficiently large to accommodate fishermen seeking refuge there the requirements of the situation seemed to be met with the condition of the harbor as it then was and there was no other present or prospective traffic through the Thoroughfare worthy of consideration in connection with the desired improvement.

Second. A preliminary examination of "Isle au Haut Thoroughfare, between the island of Isle au Haut and Kimballs Island, with a view to obtaining a channel of increased depth and width and the establishment of a harbor of refuge," was made in 1909, report of which is contained in House Document No. 486, Sixty-first Congress, second session. The physical conditions of the harbor at that time were practically the same as they were at the time of the previous preliminary examination and as they are at the present time. The permanent population had somewhat decreased to about what it is at the present time. The summer population had increased. The improvements desired were about the same as at the previous preliminary examination. The report was unfavorable on the ground that the extent of the interests involved and the benefits to be derived from the desired improvement in proportion to the probable cost were such as to make the locality unworthy of improvement by the General Government.

9. There are ample wharf facilities for the present or prospective needs of commerce. There are two wharves opposite the village, one a short distance above the village and one at Point Lookout. Passengers and freight are usually landed at the latter wharf, which, while private, is available for public use within reasonable limits.

10. I made a visit to the locality on June 23, 1915, and had a conference with parties interested and personally examined the harbor and approaches. Borings made at the time of this visit indicate that the bar is composed of soft mud underlaid with hard earth from 8 to 12 feet below mean low tide. The part of the Thoroughfare north of the bar is exposed to northwesterly gales and is not a safe harbor at all times. The part opposite the village is well sheltered and is used by the community as an anchorage, and, together with the more southerly part of the Thoroughfare, is used by passing vessels as a harbor of refuge. The southerly entrance is marked by a lighthouse. The bar is impassable to vessels, except small ones, and then only near high tide. This results in a certain amount of inconvenience. Regular boats touch at Isle au Haut on the way between Stonington and Swans Island. They land, as before stated, at a private wharf at Point Lookout, about 1 mile above the village, because it would be about 6 miles longer to go around Kimballs Island to the village. This necessitates the transfer of all passengers and baggage for the village by small boat or team. The nearest market to Isle au Haut is Stonington, about 6 miles to the north in a direct line. To reach this point from the village vessels must go out around to the south of Kimballs Island. In southerly storms it is sometimes dangerous to attempt to round the southerly point of

Kimballs Island. This results in delay until the storm subsides. Vessels anchored in the southern part of the Thoroughfare for refuge from storms could sometimes pass out through the northern end and proceed on their way when it is too stormy to go south if they were not prevented by the bar. Vessels north of Isle au Haut and seeking refuge from northern storms can not reach the lower part of the Thoroughfare for shelter on account of the bar. In order to decrease or remove all these difficulties and inconveniences it is desired by those interested that a channel be dredged through the bar. It is also desired that the rocks which are claimed to be near the route of vessels going from Point Lookout through Burnt Island Harbor and the rocks near the wharf be removed.

11. The bar appears to be mostly of soft material, although it is quite possible that some ledge might be discovered. The steamboat company complains only of the rocks near the wharf and not those near the line of vessels on the regular run. To remove the rocks near the wharf would simply make the landing more convenient. It would seem that the simplest way to do would be to extend the wharf a few feet farther. To remove the bar would reduce slightly the distance to the village from the mainland and make it possible for boats to include both the village and Point Lookout in their trips, and it would also increase somewhat the value of the harbor as a harbor of refuge. The harbor is large enough now to accommodate any vessels that would be apt to care to use it, and there is no prospect of an increase in traffic, even if the improvement were made. No less improvement than the dredging of a channel through the bar would, in my opinion, be of any value to the harbor, and the advantages to be gained by such improvement would not, in my opinion, justify the cost thereof.

12. It is therefore my opinion that the locality is not worthy of improvement by the General Government.

13. There are no water-power developments to be considered in connection with any proposed improvement of the harbor and no land reclamation or other opportunities for lessening the cost of improvement to the Government or for securing other compensating advantages.

F. A. POPE,
Major, Corps of Engineers.

[First indorsement.]

THE DIVISION ENGINEER, NORTHEAST DIVISION,
New York City, September 1, 1915.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY:

1. Forwarded.

2. This report was prepared before the receipt of General Orders, No. 9, Office of the Chief of Engineers, dated August 12, 1915. It appears to comply with all the requirements of that order with the following exceptions:

(a) There is a reference to previous preliminary examination reports which were unfavorable, but no reference to any work done by the United States. I understand no construction work has been done.

(b) There is no statement as to bridges, but the map would indicate that there are none.

(c) While the number of wharves (two) is stated, the available frontages are not given. One of these wharves is a public wharf, while the other is a private wharf, but "is available for public use within reasonable limits."

(d) The unoccupied space available for terminals is not stated.

(e) The map contains no wind chart, but the report being unfavorable, this omission, I think, can be passed over.

(f) While a list of the parties to whom notice of unfavorable report was sent is given, no copy of the notice itself accompanies the report.

3. In the views and recommendation of the district officer I concur.

FREDERIC V. ABBOT,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers.

[For report of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, see p. 2.]



THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
FROM 1682 TO 1800
BY J. C. COOPER
PUBLISHED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1845



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